

solve this issue, but the bill before us was supported unanimously by Republicans and Democrats in committee. Members of both parties are having a chance now to offer and vote on amendments to the bill too. We had several amendment votes yesterday. I expect more today. If our colleagues from either side of the aisle have more ideas to offer, I would ask them to work with Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY to get them moving.

This is what a Senate that is back to work looks like. With continued bipartisan cooperation, this is a Senate that can prove the pundits wrong again by passing another important measure to help our country and our kids.

Remember, the House of Representatives already passed its own No Child Left Behind replacement just last night, as it has done repeatedly in years past. Now is the time for the Senate to finally get its act together after 7 years of missed deadlines on this issue. A new Senate majority believes that the time for action and bipartisan reform should be now, and with continued cooperation from our friends across the aisle, it will be.

BURMA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, a few weeks ago I came to the floor to discuss the importance of Burma's election this fall. I noted that its conduct would tell us a lot about the Burmese Government's commitment to the path of political reform. I said that demonstrating that commitment would be critical to reassuring Burma's friends abroad and that it could even have consequences for further normalization of relations with the United States, at least as it concerns the legislative branch.

So I urged Burmese officials to take every step to ensure an election that would be as free and fair as possible. Yet on June 25, the Burmese Government took a step backward from the path to more representative government.

Let me explain. There is little doubt that Burma's Constitution contains numerous flaws that need to be revised if the government is to be truly representative.

First, it unreasonably restricts who can be a candidate for President—a not so subtle attempt to bar the country's most popular opposition figure from ever standing for that office. But then it goes even further, ensuring an effective military veto over constitutional change—for instance, amendments about who can run for the Presidency—by requiring more than three-fourths parliamentary support in a legislature where the Constitution also reserves one-fourth of the seats for the military.

Let me say that again. The Constitution reserves one-fourth of the seats for the military and requires a three-fourths vote to amend the Constitu-

tion—completely jerry-rigged. It is obvious to see why things should change if Burma is to pursue a path of a more representative government.

Allowing appropriate constitutional fixes to pass through the Parliament would have said some very positive things about the Burmese Government's commitment to political reform. But when the measures were put to a vote on June 25, the government's allies exercised the very undemocratic power the Constitution grants them to stymie the reform.

This stands in stark contrast to the support for reform among elected Burmese lawmakers, which is likely higher than 80 percent. So among the people elected by the people, 80 percent favor the reform, and the 25 percent inserted into the process by the military guaranteed that no reform occurred. So even if the actual conduct of the election proves to be free and fair, it risks being something other than, certainly, the will of the people.

When the most popular figure in the country is precluded from being a candidate for the highest office in the land, and when approximately 80 percent of the people's chosen representatives are stymied by lawmakers who are not democratically elected, it raises fundamental questions about the balloting that is coming up this fall and about the Burmese Government's commitment to democracy. In fact, at this point it is unclear if the opposition NLD Party will even participate in this fall's election.

We knew that legal, economic, political, and constitutional development and reform would evolve in that country through fits and starts. This is only realistic, given the baseline from which Burma was starting when Congress agreed to lift some of the sanctions.

Those of us who have followed Burma for a long time also know that, given its history, the military fears change, ethnic unrest, and the uncertainty that a more democratic government might bring. That is well acknowledged, but improving relations with the United States meant both sides would have to take some risks. This was a moment for the military to take another important step on its end, and it was a missed opportunity.

In light of the recent defeat of constitutional reform, I believe that steps such as including Burma in the Generalized System of Preferences Program should be put on hold until after this fall's election. Only after the ballots have been cast and counted in Burma can an appropriate evaluation be made about the pace of reform in the country and whether additional normalization of relations is warranted.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The Democratic leader is recognized.

REPUBLICAN FILIBUSTERS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first, I wish to take just a moment to praise the good work being done by the chairman and the ranking member of the HELP Committee. The senior Senator from Tennessee and the senior Senator from Washington have done a remarkably good job to bring this reauthorization to the floor.

Elementary and secondary education is so important, and we are not living up to the standards that we should have. It is important to remember that all of this could have been done a long time ago.

On the floor I mentioned yesterday that Senator Harkin—who I said was a legendary Senator who served here for six terms, plus a number of terms in the House of Representatives—for quite some time was chairman of the HELP Committee, and when he wasn't chairman, he served under the guidance and leadership of Senator Kennedy.

Yesterday I said that the Republican leader came to the floor and was boasting: Oh, we are getting this bill done. It is so great that things are working so well in the Senate.

I mentioned at that time—yesterday—that Senator Harkin tried to bring the bill to the floor. He sent me an email last night, and he said that he on two separate occasions—2011 and 2013—got a bill out of the committee. But what happened? It was blocked coming to the floor by the Republicans—the same group of people who are now boasting that things are working so well here.

Well, Mr. President, I think it is a shame that people come here to the floor and boast about the fact they have spent the last few Congresses trying to ruin Congress and the country. And they have done a pretty good job of it.

We are happy to be on this bill. And there is no motion to proceed, such as I had to do on virtually every bill we brought to the floor. But let's understand that historically. My friend the Republican leader is living in a dream world. In fact, it is fast becoming a theme of this 114th Congress—bringing up legislation that Republicans have blocked in the past. Senator STABENOW from Michigan calls it the filibuster makeup.

Look at the accomplishments about which my friend the Republican leader brags that he has gotten done this year:

Terrorism risk insurance. We would have done that at any time during the last Congress—at any time—and he knows it.

The Clay Hunt suicide prevention bill. That was a bill which was so easy to get done. It was blocked. The Republicans wouldn't let us move forward on it.

Appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security. We were prevented from doing that.

The human trafficking bill. We spent a lot of time on it in this Congress. We

would have done that last Congress easily. We were prevented from doing so.

The repeal of Medicare's sustainable growth rate. We call it SGR. We would have done that at any time, Mr. President. There are no great shakes here. How did we get it done? It wasn't paid for. Why? Because it was a budget gimmick in the first place, during the Bush years.

So to hear my friend the Republican leader coming and boasting about all this stuff getting done, we could have done—most of it could have been done two Congresses ago. Certainly in the last Congress we should have gotten it done.

The extension of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—the PATRIOT Act. We knew it had to be done. We tried to get it done last Congress but couldn't get it done. We were prevented from doing so.

Now it is the same with the elementary and secondary education bill. I am glad we are on this and glad to complete this other stuff, but let's not try to rewrite history, Mr. President. These things could have been done easily had they not been filibustered here on the Senate floor. Any one of these bills would have easily passed in the last Congress, but every one of them was blocked by Republicans.

MANUFACTURED CRISES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we hear the phrase "manufactured crisis" used a lot here lately. Why? The Republican leader gives people plenty of reason to use the term. He has singlehandedly turned the entire appropriations process into a charade designed to manufacture yet another crisis.

Look no further than what Republicans are doing in the interior, environment appropriations bill. The Republican leader bragged yesterday—today is Thursday, so on Wednesday—that he and his colleagues have "lined the interior appropriations bill with every rider you can think of to push back against them."

They have filled that legislation with so-called riders. What is a rider? It is an extraneous provision that has nothing to do with the purpose of the bill—in this instance, a funding bill. So they have filled that legislation, the interior appropriations bill, and other bills that have nothing to do with funding the government with things that are harmful to our country.

For example, in the appropriations bill dealing with the interior, Republicans have included language to permanently dismantle efforts to address climate change by blocking Federal enforcement of a nationwide policy to reduce carbon pollution from existing powerplants.

Climate change is very hurtful to our economy and hurtful to our country.

I was at an event at the White House two nights ago. The President said that if we don't do something about climate

change by the year 2100, the seas will have increased by 16 feet. The State of Florida will basically be half underwater.

Prior to 2100, it is already getting bad. Talk to the two Senators from Virginia. Areas that are military installations are now covered with water most of the time. Talk to my friend the senior Senator from Florida, and he will tell you what is happening in Florida now. Talk to the Governor of New York, and he will tell you what happened with Sandy, the hurricane. It is going to happen again because we are doing nothing to prevent climate change from devastating our country. The Presiding Officer is from the State of Nevada, as am I. He knows that bears—not all bears but many bears are not even hibernating in the Sierras anymore because it is not cold enough. Talk to one of the Senators from New Hampshire. The moose are being devastated. Why? Because the cold weather is not killing the gnats, the fleas on the moose, and they are dying. About a third of them are dead.

So climate change is not serious? It is a serious issue. Of course it is.

Republicans have riders in this bill dealing with clean water. They have stuck in language to permanently block implementation of protections for streams and wetlands that have the greatest impact on our Nation's water quality.

Ozone pollution is another rider they slipped in there. They slipped in language to delay efforts to protect people from lung diseases and asthma, among other things.

Hazardous waste cleanup—now, this is unique. They stuck language in this bill affecting Superfund sites. This has been a great program. It has been a great program because people who devastate and pollute the land are asked to pay to clean it up. Republicans have stuck language in here to have the taxpayers clean this up and pay for it. That is stunning to me.

This is a perfect example of Republicans manufacturing a crisis. They have loaded up a necessary funding measure with dangerous provisions that have doomed these bills. Then when Democrats oppose it, the Republican leader will feign outrage and blame Democrats for its failure, hoping to score some type of political victory.

Republicans know an appropriations bill full of riders that roll back environmental protections will be stopped by us and vetoed by the President. This scripted performance is the definition of a manufactured crisis. And the Republican leader said as much last year in an interview with the Hill newspaper Politico. Here is what he said:

Obama needs to be challenged, and the best way to do that is through the funding process. He would have to make a decision on a given bill, whether there's more in it that he likes than dislikes. A good example is adding restrictions to regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency. Adding riders to spending bills would change the behavior of the bureaucracy.

He promised that last year, and he is a man of his word. He is ruining every one of these appropriations bills with these riders, in spite of more asthma, more heart disease, more cancer.

Instead of passing appropriations bills that keep our government open and funded, the Republican leader is more interested in making Democrats and Republicans not work together and having the President and Democrats very uncomfortable. Sadly, this is how Republicans are governing. This is how they pretend to lead our country. It is embarrassing. I believe it is. Look at the poll numbers to see what is happening. The Republican leader's numbers are the lowest they have ever been recorded.

It doesn't have to be this way. With the help of a handful of reasonable Republicans, we can sidestep this sham and pass meaningful legislation that averts another government shutdown. The first one was promoted and engineered by the Republicans.

I said yesterday and I repeat, Mr. President, to show how shameful that was, two-thirds of the Republicans in the House voted to keep the government closed. I mentioned yesterday how the Republican chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, Congressman HAL ROGERS—whom people call the Dean of the Kentucky delegation—is calling on his party to work with us Democrats on a long-term solution that avoids a government shutdown. We need Republicans like him here in the Senate.

In just a few months, the government will run out of money. It will have no more money on October 1. Unless we can reach a bipartisan budget agreement, our Nation will face another ridiculous and damaging government shutdown. So I urge my Republican friends—especially Republican leaders in both Houses—to listen to Chairman ROGERS and those other members of the Committee on Appropriations and work together. Put aside these non-serious games and get serious about keeping our government open. It is the only way Congress will avoid another manufactured crisis the Republican leader seems so desperately to desire.

WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM NAME

Mr. REID. Mr. President, finally, yesterday the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia affirmed what Native Americans have been saying for decades—the Washington football team name is disparaging. It is racist and morally objectionable, and it should be changed now.

U.S. District Court Judge Gerald Bruce Lee sustained the Patent and Trademark Office's decision that the Washington football team name should not be protected by a Federal trademark registration. That is good news. But how did the Redskins respond? Sorry to use that name. I made a mistake. How did the Washington football